Request for Proposal for EBT Services

Section 3, Current Environment

RFP-OSI-0530-204

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California Health and Human Services Agency
Office of Systems Integration

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3   Current Environment

This section presents an overview of EBT services in California and the current EBT system. It includes a discussion of the organization and structure of EBT in the state, a technical overview, a description of the commercial environment, and a summary of state operations. Note that requirements are not included in this section. Refer to Section 5, Administrative and Bidder Requirements, and Section 6, Business and Technical Requirements, for all requirements.

3.1   Organization and Structure of EBT in California

3.1.1   Social Services in California

The CDSS administers federal and state social services programs. The CDSS provides state-level oversight and policy development for these programs. However, the operation of social service programs is county based. Each county is responsible for running its social services programs and issuing benefits. As such, while general processes and policies are the same in each county, there are substantial differences between counties in organizational structure, number of office locations, operational processes and policies, automation, and, to a lesser degree, programs and services offered.

Because of these operational differences, being the EBT service provider to California is, in many respects, like having 59 customers (58 counties and the state) instead of one customer. Moreover, counties play a significant role in many EBT-related efforts and bidders should be aware of the influence California's counties have on the state and the direction of the EBT Project as a whole.

3.1.2   EBT Project Structure

EBT in California is implemented as a statewide system with a single EBT card design and Bank Identification Number (BIN), a single EBT processing system, and a single standardized set of system interfaces (batch, administrative application, and host-to-host) that all counties use. The OSI manages California's EBT services and represents all stakeholders in aspects of project operations. To that end, there are four (4) main stakeholders in California's EBT program: the CDSS, the OSI, county social services agencies, and the SAWS consortia. Each is described below.

3.1.2.1   California Department of Social Services

The CDSS serves as the project sponsor and, as noted above, provides policy direction, advocates for the EBT Project at the executive level, and provides legal support. CDSS representatives participate in EBT Project meetings and EBT committees.

Within the CDSS, the Office of Systems Oversight is responsible for contract management of Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V), as well as Independent Project Oversight consultants that work on OSI projects.

3.1.2.2   Office of Systems Integration

The OSI serves as the project management entity for the EBT Project and is the current EBT Contractor's primary point of contact for the EBT Project. The OSI oversees day-to-day operations of California's EBT program, provides contract management and quality assurance, and coordinates communications with federal, state, and county stakeholders. In addition, the OSI oversees the development, testing, implementation, and acceptance of all system changes and reviews and accepts all contractor deliverables. Refer to Section 3.4, EBT Operations, for more information on OSI roles and responsibilities.

The OSI also facilitates the EBT Change Control Board (CCB) that reviews and recommends improvements and changes to the EBT system and EBT processes. The CCB includes representatives from the CDSS, county social services agencies, the SAWS consortia, and other key stakeholders. The successful Contractor is expected to participate in CCB meetings, which currently occur on a quarterly basis.

3.1.2.3   County Social Services Agencies

The 58 county social services agencies conduct benefit issuance and are the primary users of the EBT administrative application (or administrative application as it is referred to in the current system) and equipment. As such, the current EBT Contractor receives direct inquiries from counties related to the EBT system, administrative equipment, as well as cardstock and related materials. However, counties must go through the CCB and the EBT Project when requesting an EBT system change or enhancement.

3.1.2.4   Statewide Automated Welfare System

Each county uses one (1) of the four (4) eligibility systems. The current EBT Contractor works with the SAWS eligibility systems to test and implement changes to the EBT system that affect county eligibility system operations and vice versa. Like county social services agencies, the current EBT Contractor receives direct inquiries from the SAWS consortia related to the EBT system, telecommunications, and interfaces. Consortia representatives participate on the CCB.

Refer to Section 3.2.3, Statewide Automated Welfare System, for more information on the SAWS consortia.

3.1.2.5   Lines of Communication

The following organizational chart presents the general lines of communication between the OSI and some of its key stakeholders.
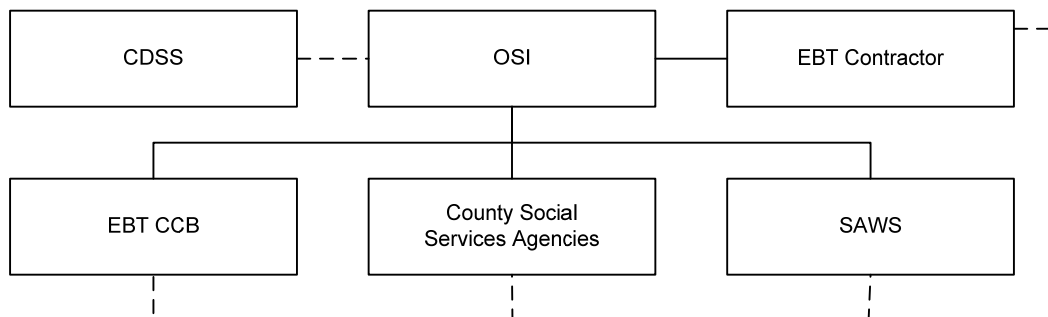
The dotted lines from the current EBT Contractor represent its interaction with the counties, EBT committees, and the SAWS consortia. However, the formal relationship lies between the OSI and the current EBT Contractor.

3.1.3   Programs Served by EBT

Approximately 880,000 California households receive food stamp and/or cash benefits that are issued using EBT. Each month, counties issue over $200 million in food stamp benefits and $235 million in cash benefits. Cardholders have over 83,000 locations where they may access food stamp and/or cash benefits including 30,000 Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) authorized retailers for food stamp benefits, as well as 31,500 Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) and 21,800 retailer locations for cash benefits.

Counties issue daily benefits based on the initial eligibility determination and monthly benefits thereafter (as long as eligibility is maintained). Counties also offer expedited food stamp benefits that must be issued to the client within 72 hours of receipt of application and immediate need cash aid for CalWORKs that must be issued within 24 hours of receipt of application. These emergency programs are also part of the state's EBT Project.

The EBT Project in California currently supports the following programs:

- Federal Food Stamp Program – This is a food assistance program governed by the FNS, which helps low-income people buy the food they need for good health. Food stamp clients receive benefits monthly. The FNS establishes national food stamp policies and authorizes food retailers to accept food stamp benefits as payment from customers. The FNS monitors retailers' program compliance and investigates retailers suspected of fraudulent activities. All 58 counties use EBT to issue food stamp benefits.

- California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) – CFAP serves a portion of the legal immigrant population that is not eligible for federal food stamps solely due to their immigrant status. The state purchases food stamp benefits from the FNS for

CFAP clients and uses a back-end reconciliation process to reduce the amount of the federal draw by the CFAP benefit issuances. A monthly reconciliation is performed to ensure proper funding. All 58 counties use EBT to issue CFAP benefits.

- California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) – CalWORKs is the state's version of the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. Clients receive cash grants based on their individual level of income. They may spend their cash grants without restrictions regarding products or services purchased. California's 58 counties administer the CalWORKs program, pursuant to guidelines and regulatory mandates issued by the CDSS. Currently, 54 of the 58 counties use EBT to issue CalWORKs benefits.

- Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) – RCA provides cash and Medi-Cal benefits to individuals and families who meet eligibility requirements regarding length of time in the U.S., residency, income, and property. Currently, 25 of the 58 counties use EBT to issue RCA benefits.

- General Assistance/General Relief (GA/GR) – GA/GR is a state-mandated, county-administered program designed to provide relief and support to indigent persons who are not supported by their own means, other public funds, or assistance programs. Each county's GA/GR program is established by its Board of Supervisors and funded (100 percent) by the county. Eligibility requirements and cash grant amounts vary from county to county. Currently, 13 of 58 counties use EBT to issue GA/GR benefits. This number is currently low due to the fact that two (2) of the SAWS eligibility systems do not support the GA/GR program and some counties opt not to issue GA/GR benefits using EBT.

- Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) – CAPI is a state-funded program designed to provide monthly cash benefits to aged, blind, and disabled immigrants who are ineligible for federal Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment benefits solely due to their immigrant status. Currently, 18 of the 58 counties use EBT to issue CAPI benefits.

- Restaurant Meals Program – The federal Food Stamp Program restricts eligible food items to products packaged and intended for home consumption. However, the Food Stamp Act[8] provides the option for states to implement a Restaurant Meals Program that would enable homeless, disabled, and elderly food stamp clients who do not have access to home cooking facilities to use food stamp benefits to purchase meals at participating restaurants. In California, eligible clients can purchase restaurant meals from FNS-authorized restaurants using the same EBT card. Currently, four (4) of the 58 counties are participating in the Restaurant Meals Program.

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[8] Enacted in 1977.

3.2   Technical Overview

This section presents an introduction to California's EBT technical environment. Detailed requirements and information are provided in Section 6, Business and Technical Requirements, and associated appendices.

3.2.1   EBT Host System

The EBT system is hosted by the current EBT Contractor's data center. The EBT host system captures and maintains client demographic and benefit data. It supports online transaction processing, administrative application functionality, file acceptance and transfer, and reporting. All system activity is tracked on a county-by-county basis, and all reports are created and generated on a county-by-county basis. There are also state-level reports for statewide reporting and data analysis.

3.2.2   Interfaces

The EBT system interfaces with county eligibility systems in two (2) ways: host-to-host messages and batch files. Additionally, counties use a standalone administrative application that enables users to conduct EBT transactions directly on the EBT host. There are currently over 40 interfaces between county eligibility systems, the SAWS consortia, SARS, and the EBT host system. The current EBT Contractor supports and manages the telecommunication infrastructure with each of the 58 counties for online database access and card embossing, as well as the telecommunication infrastructure with the data centers operating the county eligibility systems. Detailed information on interfaces is provided in Appendix C.

The host-to-host interface works in conjunction with the batch interface for case/client demographic data and benefit data maintenance, and is used primarily for inquiry transactions, card issuance, and expedited benefit issuance.

3.2.2.1   Host-to-Host

The host-to-host interface refers to transaction data sent to and processed by the EBT host directly from the eligibility system in an online, real-time environment. Data is processed in a request/response message format with data originating from the actions of a caseworker using the eligibility system.

The host-to-host transactions can be broken out into five (5) categories:

- <u>Inquiry transactions</u> – Case, client, card, and benefit and account history.
- <u>Demographic maintenance</u> – Addition and modification of cardholder data.

- Benefit maintenance – Addition and/or cancellation of benefits.

- Card maintenance – Issuance and re-issuance of an EBT card and changing card status.

- Miscellaneous updates – Includes benefit repayments and unlocking of Personal Identification Numbers (PINs).

The host-to-host connection between the county eligibility systems and the EBT host is a Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) connection. The current EBT Contractor uses a standard Internet Protocol addressing convention for traffic flowing between the EBT system and the eligibility systems.

3.2.2.2   Batch

County eligibility systems send demographic and benefit batch files at specific intervals using File Transfer Protocol (FTP) methodology to transfer a uniquely configured file and, in return, receive a number of files from the EBT host utilizing the same FTP methodology. The current EBT Contractor receives a minimum of 58 daily client benefit files, 58 daily client demographic files, and 58 monthly benefit files. The size and frequency of these files vary.

Files sent from the EBT host to the county eligibility systems include:

- Batch Posting Return – Daily files that inform the county of the disposition of a batch file previously sent to the EBT system.

- Returned Demographic and Benefit Files – Daily files with header information when entire files are accepted along with individual records and associated error codes when records are rejected.

- Account Activity – Daily files that contain the details of all financial transactions, both settling and nonsettling, that occurred during the previous settlement day. The files contain the transactions as well as separate records of the individual benefit authorization (grant) amounts that were used to satisfy the transaction request.

- Inactive, Dormant, and Expunged – Daily files that contain a record for EBT accounts that have not been accessed within the last 45 days (inactive), 90 days (dormant), and 270 days (expunged).

- Grant Expungement – Daily files to identify benefits that have reached expungement status and are removed from the EBT system.

- Adjustment – Daily files to notify the county of a pending debit or credit adjustment against a client's EBT account from a retailer and/or ATM to resolve a transaction error.

- Unlinked Benefits – Daily files that identify benefits for which there are no corresponding EBT clients (demographic files). If the account is not established upon receipt of a benefit authorization record, the benefit is unlinked.

3.2.2.3   Administrative Application

The administrative application interface is directly connected to the EBT host through a connection with the eligibility systems. For those counties that do not currently have a host-to-host interface, county staff use the administrative application primarily for emergency benefit issuance, account inquiry, PIN unlocks, and card deactivation/ replacement.

The administrative application functionality has its own security subsystem that requires the user to log on to the system using a unique logon and password. Access to functionality is based upon user profiles, with each profile defined uniquely for a different class of users. The state is currently moving to a browser-based version of the application, the requirements of which are further described in Section 6.7, Administrative Application.

3.2.3   Statewide Automated Welfare System

Each county uses one of the following four (4) consortia eligibility systems within SAWS:

- Consortium IV (C-IV)

- Interim Statewide Automated Welfare System (ISAWS)

- Los Angeles Eligibility, Automated Determination, Evaluation and Reporting System (LEADER)

- CalWORKs Information Network (CalWIN)

The current EBT Contractor interfaces with the eligibility system consortia independently. These eligibility systems have varying lifecycles, thus requiring the current EBT Contractor to re-certify interfaces whenever changes are introduced. Also, the current EBT Contractor must accommodate migration of county eligibility systems between consortia.

Appendix D provides a listing of the consortia membership by county.

3.2.3.1   C-IV

C-IV is a consortium of four (4) counties that is run by a Joint Powers Authority (JPA). The JPA is comprised of the welfare directors from the four (4) counties. Accenture is the prime contractor for this consortium. C-IV is a browser-based system and manages over 13 percent of the state's caseload.

C-IV uses a series of batch processes to send demographic and benefit data to the EBT host system. Each county maintains its own connection to the EBT host for card embossing, file transfer, and administrative application transactions. C-IV is currently developing a host-to-host interface to the EBT host that is scheduled for completion in mid-2007.

3.2.3.2   ISAWS

ISAWS is a consortium comprised of 35 counties primarily in northern and central California and manages over 12 percent of the state's caseload. The state manages ISAWS and Deloitte Consulting is the prime contractor on the system.

The counties all connect to the ISAWS host, and the ISAWS host has a single, direct connection to the EBT host. The single connection is used for the administrative application, card embossing, and file transfer. ISAWS also offers a host-to-host interface—using the same connection—that allows users to execute most EBT transactions in the context of the eligibility system. County staff rarely use the administrative application.

The ISAWS counties have opted to migrate to C-IV. Planning for the migration is underway and the state expects the migration to be completed by 2010. The Contractor can expect to test interfaces as the migration occurs and the state would execute a work authorization for these testing activities.

3.2.3.3   LEADER

LEADER is used exclusively by Los Angeles County. It supports almost 40 percent of the state's caseload. Los Angeles County manages the system, and Unisys is the prime contractor for LEADER.

LEADER has two (2) connections to the EBT host. The first is a direct connection from LEADER to the EBT host and the second is a connection from LANet—the County's network—to the EBT host. Some functionality such as card embossing is dependent on both network connections being operational. Like ISAWS, the LEADER connection uses a host-to-host interface to execute EBT transactions.

3.2.3.4   CalWIN

A consortium of 18 counties uses the CalWIN eligibility system. They support over 35 percent of the state's caseload. Electronic Data Systems is the prime contractor for this consortium.

Counties have their own direct connection to the EBT host for the administrative application and card embossing. However, the CalWIN host maintains a single connection for file transfer and host-to-host transactions.

3.2.4   Statewide Automated Reconciliation System

To meet the federal requirement for state-level and county-level daily reconciliation, California developed and operates SARS, which is used to reconcile issued EBT benefits. The system captures the statewide food stamp settlement total and settlement data for the 54 cash EBT counties.

SARS has also become a critical repository of EBT-related reports and files. The current EBT Contractor sends over 130 reports and files to SARS each day. Having this data on SARS allows the state and counties to conduct additional reporting and queries.

SARS also serves as the state's repository for EBT data and receives:

- Copies of every daily and monthly benefit file received by the EBT host. These files are sent to the EBT host by the county eligibility systems.

- Copies of every benefit return file produced by the EBT host for all the counties.

- Copies of selected end-of-day files for each county and statewide end-of-day files containing records for all counties.

- Copies of all daily and monthly reports generated by the EBT host.

3.2.5   EBT Card and PIN Issuance

EBT cards are issued and mailed by the current EBT Contractor or embossed in a local county office. Mail issuance is used for 53 percent of all new cardholders and for 23 percent of all card replacements. New cardholders receive a PIN in the mail two (2) to three (3) delivery days after receiving the EBT card. A training pamphlet, instructional wallet card, and card sleeve are also included with new cards. Replacement EBT cards are also issued by mail or in a local office.

To issue EBT cards in a local office, each county has embossers and Card Activation PIN Selection (CAPS) devices. Some counties have elected to issue all cards (new and replacement) themselves. Other counties use the embossers solely for expedited food stamps, immediate need cash aid, and replacement cards. When an EBT card is issued in the county, the county provides the training pamphlet, wallet card, and card sleeve directly to the cardholder.

The state provides one (1) of two (2) sizes of embossers to the county. The size provided is dependent on overall county caseload. Large counties, or those that are geographically dispersed, have multiple embossers in several locations. The embossers connect to the EBT host and have embosser driver software on a local personal computer. The state-owned CAPS devices run on analog lines that, in many counties, are dedicated.

Counties order blank EBT cardstock and card sleeves directly from the current EBT Contractor which ships cardstock and sleeves directly to the counties. Counties order training pamphlets and other written materials from the state. (Information on client training materials is available in the bidders library.) The current EBT Contractor also orders training pamphlets and wallet cards from the state, for inclusion with new cards.

3.2.6   Benefit Issuance

Ongoing food stamp and cash benefits are issued at the beginning of the month. It is important to note that California staggers the actual issuance of food stamp and cash benefits during the first few days of the month. The stagger is based on the last digit of the client's case number. Food stamps are staggered over a ten-day period in the beginning of the month where the last digit of the case number corresponds to the day of the month on which benefits are issued. For example, if the case number ends in "4" food stamp benefits are issued on the fourth day of the month, and if the case number ends in "0" benefits are issued on the tenth.

Most of California's cash programs are also staggered. The cash stagger was created to minimize the traffic and impact on retailers and ATMs and varies depending on the type of cash program. For most counties, cash benefits are staggered over a three-day period at the beginning of the month where clients whose case numbers end in "1-3" are issued benefits on the first day of the month. Clients whose case numbers end in "4-7" and "8-0" are issued benefits on the second and third day of the month, respectively. Los Angeles County issues its CAPI and RCA benefits on the first day of each month, and the county staggers its GR benefits over a ten-day period.

New applicants can apply for and receive benefits any time during the month. Once eligibility is determined, the benefits are sent to the EBT system and any current-dated benefits become available immediately. This process is also used for expedited food stamps and immediate need cash aid. Benefits for these programs must be made available—if the applicant is eligible—within 72 and 24 hours, respectively. The stagger does not apply to new applicants who receive current-dated benefits, immediate need cash aid, or expedited food stamps.

3.3   Commercial Environment

As noted above, clients have over 83,000 locations throughout the state where they may access food stamp and/or cash benefits. Appendix E lists major retailers and financial institutions that participate in the EBT cash access program.

To provide adequate access to EBT benefits and enable small retailers and some restaurants to accept the EBT card, the state has deployed over 12,000 point-of-sale (POS) devices[9]. In addition, the state has utilized wireless POS devices for farmers' markets in California, in both rural and urban settings. These "EBT-only" POS devices are used for both food stamp and cash transactions. The state owns these devices and the current EBT Contractor is responsible for maintenance. The current EBT Contractor has an inventory management methodology and system to accurately track each piece of equipment by type, model and serial number, state asset tag number, county, and location.

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[9] Restaurants may use an EBT-only POS device to support the Restaurant Meals Program. Currently, the devices are used by several franchises of Subway, Carl's Jr, Pizza Loca, and other small restaurants.

Authorized FNS retailers may request an EBT-only POS device at any time. If the retailer meets the monthly food stamp redemption requirements, the current EBT Contractor sends the retailer a package that includes a retailer agreement, user manual, manual vouchers, decals, and other materials. Upon receipt of the completed retailer agreement, the current EBT Contractor sends the equipment. Retailers can call a toll-free retailer-assistance telephone number to obtain installation and operational help. If needed, the current EBT Contractor provides onsite retailer support.

Access to cash is provided by retailers and financial institutions throughout the state. Financial institutions include national, state, and local banks. Several financial institutions have agreed to provide surcharge-free cash access at their ATMs and some allow clients to withdraw up to $1,500 in a single ATM transaction.

There are no fees for using the EBT card for food stamp purchases. However, clients may incur fees and surcharges for using the EBT card for cash transactions. Specifically, a client may access an ATM up to four (4) times per month without incurring a fee; however, the client is currently charged $0.85 for using the card at an ATM for the fifth and any subsequent transactions for the calendar month. Clients also pay $0.25 to conduct a cash balance inquiry at an ATM. Finally, some retailers and financial institutions will charge a surcharge for the privilege of using their ATMs or POS networks for cash transactions. These surcharges can range from $1.00 to more than $2.50. There are no charges to the client for purchases with cash back at a POS device.

3.3.1   Cash Access

At the present time, 54 of the 58 counties issue cash benefits via EBT as shown in Exhibit 3.1, California Cash EBT Counties, on the following page. The primary goal of cash access is to ensure clients have reasonable access to their cash benefits under EBT. Clients should also be able to withdraw the sum of their cash benefits within four (4) withdrawal transactions per month to be able to effectively meet their financial obligations such as rent or utilities.

As part of the effort to ensure adequate access to cash benefits, the current EBT Contractor provides annual county-specific Cash Access Plans that discuss cash access in each county. Counties also receive a monthly cash access report that lists, by zip code, locations in the county where cash may be accessed. The report includes information on the amount of cash available in a single transaction and applicable surcharges. Counties often provide the report as a resource to clients who inquire where they can access cash benefits. Counties also receive a monthly retailer listing that identifies FNS-authorized retailers by zip code. (County cash access plans, monthly cash access reports, and retailer reports are available in the bidders library.)

The four (4) remaining food stamp-only counties (Fresno, Mono, Placer, and Sierra counties) may elect to add cash benefits via EBT in the future. If so, the state would develop a work authorization for the implementation of cash EBT in the county.

FIGURE 3.1, CALIFORNIA CASH EBT COUNTIES

3.3.2   Customer Service

Customer service is a critical component of California's EBT Project. The state has invested significant time and effort to promote service to cardholders, county public assistance offices, and state users.

Cardholders use a toll-free customer service telephone number to access a client helpline for most of their EBT needs. The client helpline offers an Automated Response Unit (ARU) and live customer service representatives (CSRs). The state has a dedicated telephone number and the current EBT Contractor is responsible for the ARU and customer service.

The ARU allows cardholders to do the following:

- Inquire about their balance.

- Review recent transactions.

- Inquire on account history.

- Generate a statement of account history.

- Change a PIN.

- Report a lost, stolen, or damaged EBT card.

- Inquire about the number of remaining free cash-withdrawal transactions.

Callers may also direct themselves to CSRs who provide assistance with deactivating an EBT card, replacing an EBT card, capturing information on a disputed transaction, as well as reporting a lost/stolen card, unauthorized card use, and retailer fraud.

The ARU/Call Center supports 11 languages. English and Spanish-speaking CSRs are available 24 hours per day, seven (7) days per week. For all other languages, the current EBT Contractor uses a language-line translator service to assist the CSR and cardholder. This service is available 24 hours per day, seven (7) days per week.

County staff also use the client helpline to get information on disputed transactions. The current EBT Contractor also supports a retailer helpline that offers assistance with transaction processing questions, settlement questions, and equipment malfunction issues that may arise.

California is very focused on providing the best service to its clients. As such, in the event a client disputes a transaction, the current EBT Contractor manages an expedited corrective action process that includes thorough investigation of all requests, providing necessary supporting documentation to counties, and detailed tracking of all activities associated with each correction request.

3.3.3   Settlement and Reconciliation

Under the current EBT contract, the settlement day begins at 3:00 p.m. Pacific Time and ends at 3:00 p.m. Pacific Time the following day. The current EBT Contractor then settles with acquirers and the FNS, and performs all reconciliation activities by program and at both the state and county level.

Settlement and reconciliation occurs Monday through Friday. Each of the participating cash EBT counties settles directly with the current EBT Contractor, which conducts a daily draw of funds transacted the prior business day. The counties, in turn, provide the settlement amount to the state. The state confirms the statewide settlement and reconciliation of cash benefits.

The current EBT Contractor settles directly with the FNS on the state's behalf and conducts all file transfer and reporting as required by the FNS.

3.4   EBT Operations

EBT Operations encompasses the infrastructure and processes that serve to support the EBT Project. The primary EBT operational processes include:

- Outage Management and Deficiency Tracking – These two processes are used to identify, document, track, and resolve any system problems. Outages can include transaction switch outages, ARU outages, and an outage at the EBT host. A deficiency includes questions, maintenance issues, archive requests, and correction request issues. The process involves reporting the outage or deficiency, notifying affected parties, correcting or addressing the issue, and documenting results or action taken. The current EBT Contractor is responsible for capturing outages and deficiencies and providing that information to the state. The state oversees the resolution of outage and deficiencies and communication with stakeholders on their resolution.

- Change Management – The purpose of the change management process is to document, assess, prioritize, and execute any system modifications and enhancements.

- Configuration Management – Configuration management refers to all activities involved in developing, implementing, and documenting a change to the EBT system. The state may initiate a work authorization to formally request and outline system modifications and enhancements brought forward by EBT stakeholders. Once the state and the current EBT Contractor agree to the scope and cost of the work authorization, the current EBT Contractor develops, tests, and implements the change. Once the change is implemented, any supporting documentation is updated using the document management process. (Refer to Section 6.34, Document Management, for more information on the document management process.)

- <u>Document Management</u> – The purpose of the document management process is to ensure EBT documentation is updated based on deficiencies, work authorizations, or regularly scheduled update cycles.

- <u>Retail Management</u> – Retail management includes all activities related to approving and installing EBT equipment used by retailers, cash-only locations, and farmers' markets.

- <u>Inventory Management</u> – Inventory management includes all activities related to ordering, approving, installing, accepting, and accounting for EBT equipment used by the counties and retailers.

- <u>Invoice Management</u> – The purpose of the invoice management process is to receive, audit, and approve the current EBT Contractor's invoice in a timely manner.

The EBT Maintenance and Operations Guide details these processes and is included in the bidders library.

The current EBT Contractor sends the state and counties a wide array of reports including those related to customer service, system performance, settlement and reconciliation, correction requests, file and data transfer, inventory levels, financials, and fraud.

To access reports, the current EBT Contractor provides authorized users access to a browser-based application where text and data file versions of the reports may be viewed and/or downloaded. A few reports are also sent directly to the counties.